

SEP 18 2007

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for communicating information to a caller on a telephone network, said method comprising ~~the steps of:~~
 - (a) generating a signal suitable for producing an audible dial tone;
 - (b) transmitting said signal to the receiver of a telephone set, when said caller initially takes said receiver off-hook, to thereby produce said audible dial tone; and
 - (c) superimposing an audible information message over said audible dial tone while said audible dial tone is produced such that said audible dial tone is capable of being recognized by a wait for dial tone modem so that the wait for dial tone modem can commence dialing.
2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said caller is a human being or a modem.
3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said telephone network includes at least one of a Public Switched Telephone Network, a Voice over Internet Protocol telephone network, an Integrated Services Digital Network compatible telephone network, or a private telephone network.
4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said signal suitable for producing an audible dial tone is an oscillating electrical signal.
5. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein generating the signal ~~step (a)~~ is accomplished with a dial tone generator comprising an oscillator circuit.
6. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said telephone set is an analog telephone set, an electronic telephone set, a digital telephone set, a Voice over Internet Protocol

telephone set, an Integrated Services Digital Network telephone set, or a proprietary telephone set.

7. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein transmitting the signal ~~step (b)~~ is at least partially accomplished with at least one transmission means selected from the group consisting of a local loop, a trunk, and an extension line.

8. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein superimposing ~~step (e)~~ is at least partially accomplished with an electronic circuit having a memory storing said audible information message in digital format.

9. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein superimposing ~~step (e)~~ is executed and repeated periodically, ~~for the duration of step (b)~~.

10. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein superimposing ~~step (e)~~ is executed and repeated intermittently, ~~for the duration of step (b)~~.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said audible information message includes human-intelligible words.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said audible information message has the characteristic of being whisper-like.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said audible information message is a branding-type message that identifies a provider of local telephone service.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said audible information message includes symbolic sounds serving to identify a provider of local telephone service.

15. (Currently amended) A method for communicating information to a caller on a telephone network, said method comprising:

generating a signal suitable for producing an audible dial tone;
transmitting said signal to the receiver of a telephone set, when said caller initially takes
said receiver off-hook, to thereby produce said audible dial tone; and
superimposing an audible information message over said audible dial tone while said
audible dial tone is produced A method according to claim 1, wherein said audible dial tone has
an associated decibel level and said audible information message has an associated overall
decibel level such that said overall decibel level associated with said audible information
message is lower than said decibel level associated with said audible dial tone.

16. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of
generating, transmitting, and superimposing steps (a) through (e) is executed at a public local
exchange or a private branch exchange.

17. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said telephone set is an
Integrated Services Digital Network telephone set, and at least one of steps (a) through (e) is
executed from within said Integrated Services Digital Network telephone set.

18. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, said method further comprising
the steps of:

executing steps (a) through (e) only generating the signal after said caller initially takes
said receiver off-hook, and
executing steps (a) through (e) only until said caller begins to dial a number on said
telephone set.

19. (Currently amended) A method for communicating information to a caller on a
telephone network, said method comprising the steps of:
generating a signal suitable for producing an audible dial tone;
transmitting said signal to the receiver of a telephone set, when said caller initially takes
said receiver off-hook, to thereby produce said audible dial tone; and
superimposing an audible information message over said audible dial tone while said
audible dial tone is produced;

wherein said audible information message has the characteristic of being whisper-like
such that said audible dial tone is louder than said audible information message;
and
wherein said audible information message is a branding-type message that identifies a
provider of local telephone service.

20. (Currently amended) A method for communicating information to a caller on a
telephone network, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) generating a signal suitable for producing an audible dial tone;
- (b) transmitting said signal to the receiver of a telephone set, when said caller initially
takes said receiver off-hook, to thereby produce said audible dial tone; and
- (c) superimposing an audible information message over said audible dial tone while said
audible dial tone is produced;

wherein said audible dial tone has an associated decibel level and said audible
information message has an associated overall decibel level such that said overall
decibel level associated with said audible information message is lower than said
decibel level associated with said audible dial tone; and
wherein said audible information message is a branding-type message that identifies a
provider of local telephone service.